

## FATAL ACCIDENT

### Worker fell into lift shaft

On 18 April 2023, a worker was carrying out welding work at a newly constructed lift shaft when he fell into the shaft and landed on the ground about six metres below. The worker was sent to the hospital where he died of his injuries.

Preliminary investigations revealed that guard rails were present around the open side of the lift shaft. The worker was not equipped with any fall-arrest equipment or travel restraints when the accident occurred.

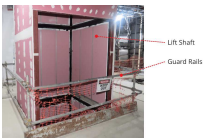


Figure 1: Scene of the accident.



Figure 2: Distance from the guard rail to the open side of the lift shaft.

Workers are at risk of falling from height when working next to or inside a lift shaft. The WSH Council calls on all companies taking on similar work activities to put in place the necessary measures to prevent falls.

### What companies should do

Companies should urgently assess and ensure that their WSH management system includes the following measures or checks:

- **Fall Prevention Plan (FPP):** Establish and implement a site-specific FPP to reduce the risk of falling into a lift shaft.
- **Permit-to-Work (PTW) system:** Put in place a PTW system for work activities where a person could fall more than three metres. Ensure on-site checks are carried out by a competent person and risk controls are confirmed effective before authorising the work at height.
- **Safe Work Procedure (SWP):** Develop a SWP for carrying out welding works inside the lift shaft. Provide a proper means of access and a secure working platform (such as scaffold structure inside the lift shaft) for workers to safely carry out their work.
- **Effective guard railing:** Install guard railings as per Figure 3.

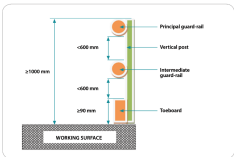


Figure 3: Dimension requirements for guard rails.  
(Source: Code of Practice for Working Safely at Heights)

- **Worker training:** Deploy only competent welders who have completed work-at-height training for work inside or next to a lift shaft. Instruct workers never to climb over or through guard rails.
- **Work supervision:** Supervise workers to ensure the SWP is strictly followed. Consider the use of video surveillance systems to supplement or raise the level of supervision for multiple worksites.
- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):** If work next to an open side is unavoidable, provide workers with travel restraints or fall arrest equipment, and train workers to achieve 100% tie-off at all times.

For more information, refer to the [WSH \(Work at Heights\) Regulations 2013](#), [Code of Practice for Working Safely at Heights](#), [WSH Guidelines on Working Safely during Modernization, Installation or Dismantling of Electric Passenger and Goods Lifts](#), and [WSH Guidelines on Personal Protective Equipment for Work at Heights](#).

Under the WSH Act, first-time corporate offenders may be sentenced to the maximum fine of \$500,000 whilst individuals can either be sentenced to the maximum fine of \$200,000 and/or an imprisonment not exceeding 2 years. Read more on the [WSH Act penalties](#).

During the extended Heightened Safety Period (1 September 2022 to 31 May 2023), the Ministry of Manpower will impose severe actions for serious WSH lapses, which include:

- Debarment from hiring new work pass holders.
- Company leaders to personally account to MOM and take responsibility for rectifications, and attend a mandatory half-day in-person WSH training course.
- Engaging external auditors to conduct a thorough review of company's WSH processes.

\*Information on the accident is based on preliminary investigations by the Ministry of Manpower as at 20 April 2023. This may be subject to change as investigations are still on-going. Please also note that the recommendations provided here are not exhaustive and they are meant to enhance workplace safety and health so that a recurrence may be prevented. The information and recommendations provided are not to be construed as implying liability on any party nor should it be taken to encapsulate all the responsibilities and obligations under the law.

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